

DATA GEMS: How to Print and Transfer Data Tables to Excel

Using data.census.gov

Transcript

July 2020

Hi. I'm Ron Williams. The Census Bureau's new data platform, data.census.gov, already has many user-oriented features, and we continue the work to add more. One of the features that we seem to need the most is the ability to print a data table. Many users also want to save the table as a PDF. In this data gem, I will show you how to print a data table, as well as go over a couple different ways of saving a data table as a PDF. Although any table can be printed in data.census.gov, we will use table B19001. Let's start by putting B19001 in the search bar and hitting enter. You will see that it brings up table B19001, Household Income in the Past 12 Months. Click on the data table to bring it to the full view.

As I mentioned before, we are continuing our work to add new features to data.census.gov. We are also working on improving the existing features—and we recognize that we need to make improvements to the current print functionality. Right now, this print functionality is best used with smaller tables with only one or two geographies selected. We know how important printing is to our data users, and we are working as quickly as we can to implement improvements.

For now, there are some tips and tricks that we can apply to the tables to make them more print-friendly. One way is to select the Customize and Control button in the upper right corner of Google Chrome and change the zoom on the screen to a smaller number. Another way is to adjust the column width. I am going to make some adjustments to the table that I have here. I am going to make the columns widths a little smaller—maybe an inch or two.

Now let's print it. If you are using a PC, click the control and P keys at the same time. For a Mac product, click command-P. Since I am using a Mac product, I will use command-P. Clicking this will bring up the Print pane.

I'd like to pause here to go over what you see on the Print pane. On the right side of the pane you will see a preview of the printout. On the left side, you will see the total number of pages to be printed.

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You will also see the Destination. In this case, I want to select my personal printer. Once I have that selected, I can choose the pages that I want to print, the number of copies, whether I want it in portrait or landscape layout, and if I want it to print in color or black-and-white. Clicking on the More Settings chevron provides a variety of additional options for printing, including changing the margins or the scale.

In addition to the tips and tricks I mentioned earlier, I can try changing the layout or adjusting the margins if I would like to make a slightly larger table fit better on the page. In this case, though, my table fits on the page pretty well, so I am not going to change any of the settings. Once I have my options set up, I can just click the Print button to print the table.

Let's say that, instead of printing to a printer, you would like to save the table as a PDF. This is very simple to do. Instead of selecting the printer as the destination on the Print screen, you will select Save as PDF. You can see that many of the same printing options are available for this as they were for printing to a traditional printer. Once you have your options selected, click on the Save button to save the table as a PDF. Choose your location to save it to, change the name of the document, and hit the Save button. You now have the table saved as a PDF.

There is one other way that we recommend saving a data table as a PDF. This involves the copy functionality that we have in data.census.gov. One of the best features of the copy functionality is that you can make customizations to your table and they will carry over to the copied version. Let's use table S1501 as an example. Starting from the landing page, I am going to put in S1501 and hit enter. Click on the preview to open it to the full view.

Let's make some changes to the table—click on the Customize Table button. Next click on the Geographies button and select the first two states shown—Alabama and Alaska. Then hit the Close button. This will update the table from the US to the two selected states. Let's also adjust this table so it only shows the number estimates and the respective margins of error. Click on the Hide button and uncheck all of the percent boxes. Now hit the Hide button again to view the table.

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Notice that we only have the columns that we wanted showing. Click on the first white cell in the table and hit the Control and A keys. This will select the entire table—you'll know this has happened when all the cells turn red. Now right-click on any red cell and select either Copy cells or Copy with headers. I'm going to select Copy with headers. Now move to a clean Excel workbook. Right click into cell A1 and hit the paste button. The entire table will be pasted into Excel. Notice that the customizations we made to the table have carried over—only the number estimates and the respective margins of error are included.

You may need to do a little bit of cleanup work. I'm going to make column A wider so I can see the cells. I also want to widen the other columns so I can see the full label. Then I'm going to highlight the body of the table and align all the cells to the right. Once I have completed this clean up, I'm going to hit File and Save As, choose the location where I want to save the PDF version of this, rename the document, and change the Save as type to PDF. Then hit the Save button. You now have the full customized table saved as a PDF. This method allows you to create PDFs of much larger tables, with many more geographies.

I hope you found this data gem helpful. In the future, if you would like more information, please visit census.gov/academy and subscribe. Thank you.